

The Brethren Evangelist,

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A FRIENDLY CRITICISM.

In last week's issue of the EVANGELIST appears an article by brother J. C. Cassel, entitled, "Our Church Paper—Principles That Should Control It." We cannot endorse every statement in this article. Personally we have only the highest regard for Brother Cassel. We recognize his ability as a writer, and appreciate the fact that he is using it. We have labored together in State Conferences for many years, and he has been of very practical service to the church in Pennsylvania, and also to the church at large. It happens however that we differ in our opinions on some questions; it seems that we cannot see things in the same light, though this by no means hinders us from being brotherly. We love him none the less for the opinion he holds.

In the first place the statement that we refused to admit in the columns of the EVANGELIST, certain Gospel doctrines, is putting it too strongly. The question was whether the Gospel *taught* such doctrines. We claimed not, he claimed it did. Now it would have been more nearly correct, if Brother Cassel had said, that we refused to admit what *he* claimed to be certain Gospel doctrines. No Gospel doctrine is refused admittance into the columns of the EVANGELIST, but not all so *called* doctrines gain admittance to our columns. We could have wished therefore that Brother Cassel had made this statement a little more clear, so as not to leave a wrong impression.

The "free rostrum" never was an excellent thing in the G. B. church and never will be in any church. Brother Cassel mentions a few things which should be excluded from the paper, but who is to be the judge as to what may be admitted and what shall be excluded? The paper is open to all, and you must give every man an opportunity to state his opinions and present arguments to sustain them. Brother Cassel says, "If one is in error he should be allowed to publish his views so that those who are wiser may have an opportunity to correct him." This statement we cannot accept. To our mind it

is not only erroneous doctrine, but *dangerous* doctrine. Indeed? Should all who are in error have an opportunity to sow the seed of their error into the hearts of all the young readers of the EVANGELIST? Would it not be far better to *publish the truth only*, and let error out of it entirely? One may know and accept the truth without having heard the side of error. Should a minister be allowed to enter the pulpit and teach error that others who are wiser may have an opportunity to correct him? Would it be a good thing to have Ingersoll proclaim his doctrine in a Christian pulpit so that others might show him the error of his way and teach him the truth. We prefer to teach the truth only. Is it necessary that *error* should be propagated so that *truth* may abound? Let him who is in error, read the *truth* and be convinced thereby but let not several thousand be made to read error for the sake of convincing one man of the truth by contrast. If a man has something to say that is worth saying, that will instruct others and lead them in the right way, let the columns of the paper be open to him, but not to advocate error—God forbid.

According to Brother Cassel's interpretation of a "free rostrum," the German Baptists have a right to advocate their theory of uniformity in dress, in the EVANGELIST; they have a right to teach our people why they must be re-baptized to enter their fold. The Unitarian has a right to use these columns to advocate his faith which he claims is a Gospel doctrine; the Seventh Day Baptist should have a page or two to prove that the seventh day is the Sabbath and must be observed; the Reformed, Lutheran and Episcopal churches should have space to convince our people that sprinkling is baptism. Why not? The paper is open to all who hold religious views of any kind. Then we would have a paper, three fourths of which would be filled with error, and one fourth with truth, and the EVANGELIST at least ten times its present size. Shall we pay our compositors to "set up" error? Shall our church paper be guilty of advocating anything and everything that people are pleased to call "Gospel Doctrine?" To open the columns of the EVANGELIST to all, without limitation, would be disastrous to the cause it aims to establish and advance.

No, there must be some limit, fixed bounds, otherwise we will be running "wild" in a very short time. There is

matter enough on hand now, on the Passover question to fill an entire paper. If we were to publish all of it, and make it a special "Passover" number, in one month there would enough manuscript come in, to fill *two* more papers, and the great majority, after all, would be barred out. Would any of our churches allow ministers of other denominations, enter their pulpits regularly once a month and preach against the doctrine of the Brethren church? Why not? If error can do no harm, then why not let the champion of infidelity, and the advocates of the saloon have their say in the pulpit, and our ministers overcome the evil by preaching the truth. We prefer the preaching of the truth in the pulpit and through the paper, unaccompanied by error. We would much prefer to teach the truth to a people who had not heard error. It is the province of the BRETHREN EVANGELIST to promote the cause of truth. It stands for the defense of the Gospel and nothing but the Gospel, not in the narrow sense as interpreted by a few individuals but in the broad sense, as believed and taught by the Brethren church. Any doctrine that is antagonistic to the teachings of the Gospel and Brethren church, must not be advocated in this paper. The church, through its National Conference elects some one, as editor whose duty it is to properly guard these columns. Should he err in his judgment, the church has the authority to correct and reprove him; should he prove his inability to perform the duties and properly discharge the responsibilities of his office, he may be removed, and another put in his place.

A LIFE THAT PREACHES.

In this issue will be found a letter from our much beloved Brother Herrington. Our readers will be pleased to learn that he is improving and has such good prospects for entire recovery. We call special attention to the spirit of his letter. Read it again. What Christian patience! What cheerfulness! What a broad, loving, Christlike spirit! Such a life is possible only to one who can say, "Christ in me." We know of no better example as to what the spirit of Christ will do for one than the joyous, happy, cheerful, life of Brother Herrington. He is preaching—preaching powerful sermons, even while lying on his back in his bed. Confined to his bed since last December, and much of the time suffering excruciating pain, and yet withal happy, cheerful, full of joy.